DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 217 693 FL 012 930

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TITLE Films in the ESL Classroom.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 18p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Techniques; *English (Second Language); *Films; Higher Education; Learning Activities; Listening Skills; Reading Instruction; Secondary Education; *Second Language Instruction; Vocabulary Development; Writing Exercises

ABSTRACT

The most important consideration with regard to classroom use of films in an English as a second language (ESL) class is that it should be previewed by the teacher and selected according to criteria such as those suggested here. In example, short silent films that are uncluttered in appearance are good vehicles for teaching vocabulary. Some techniques for using films and soundtracks for vocabulary study, reading and writing practice, and exercises in comprehension are: (1) listen to and read the soundtrack and then do a slotted dictation on it; (2) have students read a portion of the soundtrack and then look up while they are saying it; (3) have students match definitions with underlined words; (4) use the script for sentence pattern identification; (5) provide students with a series of questions designed to focus their listening; (6) use foreign films to provide students with information teachers want them to have by making a prior reading lesson out of the subtitles; and (7) work with a tape of the soundtrack of a foreign film emphasizing aspects of culture. Examples of exercises illustrating these techniques are appended as well as lists of films that are either recommended or not recommended for use in foreign language classes. (AMH)

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Films in the ESL Classroom

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At the end of this article you will find two lists of films. I've seen all of them. The shorter list, which includes ESL materials I might use, is one of films I would show in an ESL class. The longer list with the big NO written across each page is one of the films I have rejected for class use for the reasons I have cited along the sides of those pages.

These lists illustrate the need for careful previewing before using a film in class. Showing a film that hasn't been carefully chosen and planned for in a class is a sad and unprofessional way to use film to teach ESL.

Short silent films that are uncluttered in appearance are good vehicles to teach vocabulary and encourage writing among beginning students. These films can be stopped often for discussion and to provide vocabulary. Good examples of these short films are Marcel Marceau's "In the Park", "A Boy's Journey Through A Day", "The Stringbean" and Charlie Chaplin's "One A.M." The latter is the only one of Chaplin's films I would use in a beginning class because Chaplin is solo in this film so it's easy to follow and describe. His other films are too overcrowded and confusing to use for this purpose.

Students enjoy learning the mundane vocabulary associated with a film like "In the Park." Vocabulary from the films you use should be brought before the students again while they are practicing other elements of the language like questions, short answers, tense transformations, etc. They also enjoy writing the stories these films tell.

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

There are many ESL techniques that are good for bringing soundtracks before the eyes and ears of the students before showing sound films. It is important that the students hear, and not just read, the soundtrack. If they have misconceptions about a word's pronunciation, they'll never hear what they are listening for on the soundtrack. Those misconceptions can be cleared up if the student hears and sees the soundtrack before showing the film.

Exhibit A. is a slotted dictation, a technique I heard about from Mary Hines. The students should be asked to cover everything under line 17. The teacher or another student should read the line once or twice while the students fill in the blanks with what they heard. Then they pull the cover down and check what they have put with what was said. It is important to make each line a complete sentence so that the reader can read the material naturally.

Read and Look Up, exhibit B, is another technique by which you can run a soundtrack by a student's eyes and ears before s/he hears it with the film. On signal, have the students look down and read to the slant. At another signal, have them look up and choose one to say the phrase read. The pattern is--look down, read; look up, say. At the end of this exercise, let the students read the passage through silently.

Underlining vocabulary items to choose the definition for (exhibit C) is a third way to present the soundtrack script. Notice that the students are actually working with small groups of definition choices at the bottom. This will encourage them to use context clues. No dictionaries are allowed for this exercise which I have them work on in pairs.

You, of course, can choose what you want to review as you present the soundtrack to the class. For example, in exhibits D and E., prepositions, x-words, which are those words or auxiliaries which begin yes/no questions, and verb forms are practiced.

In exhibit F., sentence pattern identification is reviewed. The symbols are T for trunk (simple sentence); T,+T. for trunk plus trunk (compound sentence); T= for trunk with 2 verbs; F,T. for front shifter, trunk; TE for trunk end shifter ; and TI for trunk insert. This terminology for sentence patterns comes from Dr. Robert Allan's work on sector analysis at Teachers College, Columbia University and is widely used among ESL teachers who have trained at that institution. If you don't use this terminology, sentence pattern practice using the terms you use would still be effective.

If I am showing a film where I want students to see the whole soundtrack before viewing the film, I divide the soundtrack script into parts and present it using several or all of these exercises I have mentioned.

Sometimes, however, when the film has a surprise ending (e.g.,"The Open Window" or "La Jetee"), I present the soundtrack script only up to the surprise. Then we see the film letting the surprise ending surprise the students. If some of them don't catch it, the end of the film can be rewound as many times as needed and stopped at critical points for understanding. A cloze of the last part could be provided for the students to fill out during this procedure.

Exhibit G. shows another technique that can be used to help students understand a soundtrack. Provide the students with a series of questions that will focus their listening. Have them read five or ten questions at a time and listen for the answers. If they have trouble getting them, rewind the film and stop it at critical answer points. G. shows questions I used for showing

"Birth", a very sensitively done imformative film about what to expect during labor and birth. Used with an informant who can expand on the labor process and how one can help onself throughout, it makes a very good lesson. I previewed several films on the birth process before choosing this one which is wonderful. Some of the others were very crudely put together with dated, or even wrong, information.

Using foreign films with information we want our students to have is also possible. In one reading class, we read The Diary of Anne Frank. I wanted to show Alain Resnais' film, "Night and Fog", which is about the concentration camps. During previewing, I read the subtitles into a tape-recorder. Then I typed my reading lesson from that tape. The students worked on the subtitle script before I showed the film with the soundtrack turned off. I read the subtitles aloud as the film turned. Without the reading lessons before, the subtitles would have hit the students much too fast and, being totally unfamiliar with them, they could have easily become lost.

All of the techniques I have described could be used with videotapes of TV programs or the cassettes that accompany filmstrip programs.

Lillian Dumont who taught a course in teaching French by film that I took at Teachers College feels that French directors unconsciously show so much about French culture when they show a wedding, a funeral, etc. She showed us full length films and had us compare wedding, funeral and other common scenes. We could deduce the conventions, the stock phrases that would be used on these occasions. That same kind of work could be done with American directors' films. They too could show our students a lot about our culture. Permission needs to be gained to tape full length films. Our students could get a lot out of seeing a film and then working from a cassette of a soundtrack. This procedure could also be used with TV programs.

Exhibit A. slotted dictation Cave People of the Philippines

17. ____ ___ ___ _____ _____ __ ____ _____--probably ___ _____ fifties.
They are the oldest members of the tribe in their

18. _____ _____ ___ , Mohyed, __ ___ tribe's toolmaker.
Their oldest son is the

19. ____ _____ ___Beera.
His wife is

20. _____ _____ __ Dina.
Their daughter is

21. ____, _____ ___ _____, __ _____.
She like her mother is beautiful

22. _____ ___ __ _____ Beekay.
Their son is called

23. ___ ____ named _____ ___ wild ___ ____ ___ ___ _____ staple ____.
He was after the yam that is the tribe's food

Exhibit B

FILM - The Loon's Necklace Read and Look Up

At last Kalorah decided/ he must use his magical power/ to save the village./ In his youth/ he had spent many days alone/ in distant hills/ communing with the spirits of nature./ Now would the spirits permit/ the donning of his sacred collar/ of dentaleum shells,/ the use of his magical bow,/ and the singing/ of his sacre song./

Shot from the magical bow,/ the arrow could not fail/ to find its mark./ The wolves did not come again,/ and there was peace in the village./ When spring came,/ Kalorah determined / to go once more/ into the hilltops/ to seek his friend/ the loon./ All day he wandered/ in the forest/ listening for that stern cry,/ bbt hearing it not./ As he felt the glow/ of the setting sun/ upon his left cheek,/ He knew that the little lake/ was right ahead of hi / He was plagued/ by mosquitoes,/ startled by the harsh cry/ of the night birds / The west winds swept the forest/ bringing a thunder storm./

A-1 DICK SPIRIT MASTER UNIT

Exhibit C

Gex

Many died. Some fancied themselves to be victors. Others were made prisoners. The survivors settled beneath the Chaillot, in a network of galleries. Above ground, in Paris, as in most of the world, everything was rotten with radioactivity. The victors stood guard over a kingdom of rats.

The prisoners were submitted to some experiments of great concern, apparently, to those who conducted them. The outcome was disappointment for some, death for others and--for others, insanity.

One day, they came to select a new guinea pig among the prisoners. He was the man whose story we are now telling. He was frightened. He had heard about the head experimenter, and was prepared to face the mad scientist--a Dr. Frankenstein. Instead of whom, he met a reasonable man who told him in a relaxed way that the human race was doomed. Space was off limits. The only link with survival passed through time--a loophole in time and then, maybe, it would be possible to reach food, medicine, energy.

This was the purpose of the experiment--to throw emissaries into time--to call past and future to the rescue of the present. But the human mind balked. To wake up in another time meant to be born again as an adult. The shock would be too much. Having sent only lifeless or unconscious bodies through different zones of time the inventors were now concentrating on men with very strong mental images. If they were able to conceive or dream another time, would they be able to live in it?

The camp police spied even on dreams. This man was selected only because he was glued to an image of his past.

Match the correct definition with the word.

___1. fancied
___2. network
___3. galleries
___4. submitted
___5. outcome

* * * * * *

___6. select
___7. guinea pig
___8. doomed
___9. off limits
___10. loophole

* * * * * *

___11. emissaries
___12. balked
___13. spied
___14. glued

a. halls
b. had a desire for or an opinion that something had happened; pictured in the mind
c. put under the control of
d. effect or result of an event
e. complex system of lines that cross
f. condemned, facing certain death
g. narrow opening in a wall
h. choose
i. animal, a little larger than a rat, often used in experiments
j. outside the lines that cannot be passed
k. watched secretly
l. stuck
m. refused to go forward
n. people who are sent on a mission

Exhibit D.

Soundtrack Script - La Jetée page 4 Gex

Identify the X-words in the numbered sentences and fill the blanks in the reading with the correct preposition.

1. It was the starting point for a whole series of tests __ which he would meet her ____different times. 2. She welcomes him in a simple way. She calls him her ghost. One day, she seems frightened. One day, she leans over him. As for him, he never knows whether he moves towards her, whether he is driven, whether he has made it up or whether he is only dreaming.

3. Around the fiftieth day, they meet in a museum with ageless animals. 4. Now they have hit the bullseye. 5. Thrown __ the right moment, he may stay there and move without trouble. The girl seems also to be tamed. She welcomes, as a natural phenomenom, the ways ___ this visitor who comes and goes, who exists, talks laughs ____ her, stops talking, listens ___ her, then vanishes.

6. Once back in the laboratory, he knew something was different. The camp leader was there. From what was said around him, he made out that, after the brilliant result ___ the experiments of the past, they now meant to ship him into the future. 7. Excitement made him forget ___ a moment that. then, the meeting at the museum had been the last.

x-words

1.____
2.____
3.____
4.____
5.____
6.____
7.____

prepositions from which to choose
at,for, in,of, to, with

Choose the correct form of the verb. Exhibit E

The term Stone Age is accurate. Until their meeting with Defall, the tribe used what the anthropologists called edged round tools, the earliest of the Stone Age instruments. These days they don't (make, makes, making, made) stone tools, but we asked them to (demonstrated, demonstrating, dmmonstrates, demonstrate) the process. Soon this may (am, be, is) only a dim memory. It has all (was, being, been) changed by the ***, the all purpose filipino knife. In a sense, the tribe jumped from the Stone Age to the Iron Age--skipping intermediate stages that had (take, takes, taking, taken) hundreds of thousands of years. Nowx the bolo is even used for (dig, digs, digging, dug) their staple food, a wild yam called Beekay. The scientists are (study, studies, studying) the tribe's diet to find out whether there is any element or any deficiency that might (suppress, suppresses, suppressed) the birthrate.

There is also concern that the use of the bolo might (depletes, depleting, deplete) some of the nearby food supply. This would (forces, force, forcing) the Tasaday to move further and further away from the caves--and, together with their newfound hunting skills, might profoundly (changes, change, changing) the pattern of their lives.

Exhibit F.

Gex

Cave People of the Philippines - soundtrack script page 8

Identify the numbered sentences as T.; T,+T.; T=; F,T.; TE. TI.

1. Because of this, they feel that the tribe's ancestors came across the then existing.....Asia and the Philippines hundreds of thousands of years ago. 2. At some distant point in time, the Tasaday lost contact with other groups. Once they settled in their caves, they never ventured far from them. 3. The rest of the world went its way, and the Tasaday became fixed in time. Their affections for each other is obvious and constant. They are nonaggressive. 4. They have no religious rituals. They have neither art nor written language. They have no words for 'weapons', 'hostility', or war. 5. The children are never struck. Angry voices are never heard. 6.Play is gentle. The older children take care of the younger ones. It is as though they are all one family.

The Tasaday also have their tragedies. 7. When we compared the pictures of our first meeting with later photos, we noticed that one of the young boys was missing. 8. He was .....,the son of Lupona, the widower. At first, some said that .....had never existed. But when his photo (was shown), someone else said he'd been lost during a sudden rain while the tribe was gathering food. Finally, we were told, he had gotten weaker and weaker and died. When asked why there was such a mystery about .....'s death, they said, We do not like to talk about unpleasant things and ,please, do not mention this to Lupona. It makes him very sad."

9..... has the gift of mimickry--a Stone Age Marcel Marceau. 10.Until recently, he had been a bachelor. 11. Cindy, now Mrs. ....., was a childless widow from the .....tribe. She came into the caves with a .....expedition as interpreter. She and .....met, took to each other, and Cindy decided to shed her clothes and join....in his cave. 12. There are rules against marrying within the tribe. In the past, this has resulted in sporadic contact between the Tasaday and at least two other groups further back in the forest unknown to the outside world and about whose location the Tasaday themselves are now uncertain. The last contact seems to have taken place between 5 and 10 years ag 13. The Tasaday are monogamous. The family group is clearly defined. The marriage ceremony is simple and touching. The members of the tribe stand around the couple and say,....., which means beautiful. 14. Then, the couple promise to live together and help each other till their hair turns white.

1.... 8....
2.... 9....
3..... 10....
4.... 11....
5.... 12....
6.... 13....
7.... 14...

Exhibit G.

Film-BIRTH

Gex

1. When does Debbie work?
2. When does Bruce work?
3. What does she do?
4. What does he do?
5. Are they both happy?
6. Have they talked about it?
7. Does he make much money?
8. Is she supporting him?
9. Does she like Bruce's work?
10. What instructions are they getting?

11. What does Elizabeth Bing ask the couples?
12. Why did the couples want to take this course?
13. What did the first woman who answered always dream about?
14. Where does she want her husband?
15. How long have Bruce and Debra been married?
16. How many children have they had?
17. What did Bruce want to do?
18. What is Mrs. Bing saying while she's pu hing?
19. After the baby is born, how many months will Debra stay home?
20. Who are these people?

21. What does Bruce's mother say about breastfeeding?
22. Does she think it's difficult or easy to wean a child?
23. Does Bruce think it's going to be a problem to have to take care of the kid for a day or two during the week?
24. What kind of book does Debra hope to work on after the baby is born?
25. Does she know people who can get her into see publishers?
26. What are they going to be liking on for six months?
27. How much income will be coming in?
28. What does Bruce hope to find before six months is out?
29. Is there a good chance they'll be making money during that time?
30. Can they get through this time without a sweat? without getting hysterical?

31. What will they have to do if, after a year, Bruce and Debbie can't find a way of making money?
32. What will they have enough money for----and nothing more?
33. What did the doctor ask Debbie?
34. What's he going to check?
35. Has she felt the baby drop?
36. Does she feel pressure on her rectum at certain times?
37. Is the baby kicking all right?
38. Did he cause her any pain when he was feeling her stomach?
39. When will the baby be born?
40. Has the head come down?

Films - Recommended for use in the ESL Classroom Judy Gex
Available from the CUNY Consortium

1. All the Wishes of the World, 1969 (silent Zagreb animation)
   if he-s, he will_____.
   SS could also write the story
   McGraw Hill, 14 minutes
2. Birth, 1968 - A film about a young couple going through LaMaze training and the birth of their child. A very human sensitive film. Questions relating to this film are available. The film is effectively used with an informant to give additional information on stages of labor, what to expect, and how to help yourself during labor.
   Verite Productions, 40 minutes
3. Boundary Lines, 1947, International Film Foundation, 11 minutes
4. A Boy's Jorney Through a Day, 1970 - silent - SS tell and write the story
   Coronet, 16 minutes

5. A Case of Suicide, 1968, Peter H. Robeck & Co., 30 minutes
6. Cave people of the Philippines* - use with sentence combining exercise-The Gentle People, Write Away, Book 11, Gallingane and Byrd
   Educational Enterprises, 39 minutes

7. Emerging Woman, 1974 - history of woman's movement from 1850s to the present
   Women's Film Project, Inc., 40 minutes
8. Ferdinand the Bull, 1971, Walt Disney, 8 minutes
9. Fidelity of Report, 1946, a very short film showing a holdup - used at John Jay to train policemen to note details - silent - The same scene is repeated twice with a break. I show it the first time to get students to write descriptions. The second showing confirms what they noted and gives them a chance to add detail
   Pennsylvania State University, 6 minutes
0. The Garden Pary, 1974 - beautiful film of Katharine Mansfield's story
   Gurian/Sholder Productions, 24 minutes
1. Hailstones and Halibut Bones, 1963 - use with children's book of the same name-metaphors
   Sterling Educational Films, 12 minutes
2. A Half Million Teenagers, 1969 - venereal diseases
   Churchill, 16 minutes
3. Islam, 1963, good composition model
   McGraw Hill, 19 minutes
4. La Jetée, 1970 - gripping science fiction
   Pyramid, 28 minutes
5. The Lady or the Tiger - used as followup to the story
   Encyclopedia Britannica, 15 minutes
6. The Loon's Necklace, 1949 - Northwest Indian Folktale - This shows a lot of carved Indian masks and might work well with a field trip to the Museum of Natural History to see their collection of mask and totem poles
   Encyclopedia Britannica, 11 minutes
7. The Lottery, 1969 - dramatization of Shirley Jackson story
   Encyclopedia Britannica, 18 minutes
8. The Music Box - Laurel and Hardy
   Blackhawk, 24 minutes
9. Nanook of the North, 1922 , silent - use with Hirasawa and Markstein - Developing Reading Skills, Chapter 8, Expert Says Arctic
   McGraw Hill, 54 minutes

ilms - ESL Classroom Judy Gex

1. Night and Fog, 1955 - used English subtitle script for a reading lesson before showing this Alain Resnais film on concentration camps without the sound. used with The Diary of Anne Frank.
   McGraw Hill, 31 minutes
1. 1985, Hirasawa and Markstein, Developing Reading Skills, Chapter 11 Affluence and Effluence
   MacMillan, 56 minutes
2. One A.M., 1916, silent solo Charlie Chaplin - good for encouraging speaking and writing
   Blackhawk, 13 minutes
3. The Open Window* - the Saki story
   Pyramid, 12 minutes
4. Peege, 1976 - a wonderful film about an old woman in a nursing home and her grown up grandson. This is a seven handkercief job. Preview it to see if you want to deal with the emotions it arouses in front of a class. Use with the chapter on nursing homes in Pifer and Mutoh, Points of View - also with Day Care for the Elderly - Perspectives by Len Fox.
   Phoenix Films,24 minutes
5. Prime of Life - short film about man pressured in his job to perform miracles and pressured at home as well. The film was made to be used as a takeoff for discussion--Is it all worth it?
   Addiction Research Foundation, 3 minutes
6. The Question - 8½ minute animated film - a little man trying to find an answer to the ultimate question. He tried religion, politics, art, science, psychiatry, and war and is not satisfied with any of them. Love is his answer
7. The Stringbean - silent - good story to elicit writing in beginning classes
   Claudon Capac Production, 17 minutes
8. Without Words,1977, Hirasawa and Markstein, Developing Reading Skills, Chapter 9, How to Read Body Language
   Prentice Hall, 23 minutes

script available from Judy Gex
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CUNY Consortium Films - Previewed and NOT recommended Judy Gex

1. Aging
2. Alvin Ailey
3. American Music-From Folk to Jazz and Pop
4. Ancient Africans
5. Angela-Portrait of a Revolutionary
6. Antonio
7. Aretha Franklin--Soul Singer
8. Astralis
9. Aspects of the Behavior of the Sifacha
10. A Baby is Born
11. Bathing Babies in 3 Cultures
12. Beach and Tide Pool Life
13. The Bend of the Niger
14. The Boarded Window
15. Body and Soul, Part II
16. Bridges-Go-Round
17. Chant d'Amour
18. Chartres Cathedral
19. Choosing for Happiness — Dating and Marriage--dated views
20. It Takes all Kinds — Did we really believe that ca. 1950?
21. City of Gold - Alaska Gold Rush
22. The Compleat Audiovisualist
23. Conformity
24. The Cows of Dolo Ken Paye
25. David: On and Off

Length, overcrowding, poor quality soundtrack, scattered presentation were among the reasons I rejected these films (some of them excellent) for use in the classroom.

26. Dead Birds
27. Digging for Black Pride
28. Dr. Leakey and the Dawn of Man
29. Eh Joe
30. The Exiles (American Indians in the city)
31. Fishing on the Niger River
32. Float Like a Butterfly. Sting Like a Bee (Muhammad Ali)
33. Four Teachers
34. Got to Tell It: A Tribute to Mahalia Jackson
35. Growing Up Female
36. Henry
37. Henri Matisse--Centennial at the Grand Palais
38. Man of Aran
39. Marriage and Divorce
40. My Childhood--Hubert Humphrey and James Baldwin
41. Nature's Half Acre
42. Niger
43. Not With An Empty Quiver (American Indians)
44. The Nuer
45. The Owl and Fred Jones
46. Pantomime--the Language of the Heart
47. The Parting
48. The Pawn Shop
49. The Rink

Chaplin--but too busy and confusing to be effective teaching tools

50. The Pusher

(17 minute Zagreb silent film, following a man from infancy onward-showing how he always pushed everyone else, including his twin aside to get his way. It shows what happens to him eventually. A beginning note and last word in Czech are not translated. If they were, I'd probably use this film.

51. Rivers of Sand
52. Russia

CUNY CONSORTIUM FILMS -- Previewed and NOT recommended Judy Gex

53. Carl Sandburg

54. Andres Segovia

55. Silent Snow, Secret Snow

56. The Sixties

57. Soon There Will Be No More Me

58. The Telltale Heart

59. Thank You Masked Man

60. Tides--Bay of Fundy

61. What are the English Language?

62. What Will Katy Do?

63. When Love Needs Care --treating V.D.

64. Where Do The Children Play? - working with the mentally retarded

65. Who Threw That Monkey Wrench?

66. A Woman

67. Worth So Many Words

68. Zen and Now

Films shown at TESOL Detroit

In The Park, 1956, Marcel Marceau, Audio-Brandon Films

Village In The Sun, 1978, Children's International Summer Villages, Casstown, Ohio

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